



Patient Information

FEEDING GUIDELINES FOR YOUR SMALL OR PRETERM BABY (34-37 weeks)

Babies who are small or born a few weeks early tend to be sleepy. Some babies start out as eager feeders but don't always drink enough milk. Others fall asleep at the breast before they have enough to drink. This is why they may not gain enough weight.

If your baby does not drink enough milk at breast, supplement with breastmilk that you have hand expressed or pumped. If you do not have enough breastmilk, use donor breastmilk from a human milk bank if available or formula as advised by your health care provider.

Many babies who are small or born a little early need extra time to practice breastfeeding. Work closely with your health care provider to be certain that you and your baby are doing well.

How to help your baby learn to breastfeed:

- Keep your baby skin-to-skin with you as much as possible, while you are awake.
- Watch for feeding cues such as:
 - Sucking or tongue movements
 - Hands to mouth
 - Restlessness
- This is a good time to express a drop of breastmilk on your nipple to help your baby go to the breast.
- Use massage or breast compression to help milk flow while baby's latched.
- When your baby is breastfeeding well you will:
 - See active sucking movements
 - Hear swallowing with every one or two sucks
 - Feel a tug at the breast
 - See enough wet and dirty diapers for that day of life
- Keep a record of each feed and all wet and dirty diapers. Show this to your health care provider.

What to do when your baby needs help with breastfeeding:

- Your baby must be fed eight times or more in 24 hours. Sometimes you may have to wake your baby to feed.
- Some babies do not breastfeed well at every feeding and **may need to be supplemented.**
- Ask your health care provider how much to give your baby and how often you should feed your baby.
- Talk with your health care provider about the various ways you can give the supplement to your baby.
- Your baby should be seen by your health care provider within **48 hours** of hospital discharge. Be certain to have your baby's **weight checked weekly.**
- Keep a record of each feed, any supplements, and wet and dirty diapers. Show this to your health care provider who will help you decide on how long you need to record this information.

How to be sure that you are making enough milk:

- Provide skin-to-skin contact with your baby at breast.
- Start expressing milk from your breasts as soon as possible after birth if your baby is not breastfeeding effectively.
- When expressing, combine hand expression and pumping using a hospital grade electric pump. Ask your health care provider about pump rental sites.
- Use breast pump kits that allow you to pump both breasts at the same time.
- Express milk after breastfeeding if your baby:
 - Does not drink enough milk at breast
 - Needs a supplement of your breastmilk, donor milk from a human milk bank, or formula
 - Is not having enough wet and dirty diapers
 - Is often sleepy when drinking at the breast
 - Is fussy after breastfeeding and shows hunger cues

References:

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, Protocol #10 (2011). Breastfeeding the late preterm infant (34 0/7 to 36 6/7 weeks gestation)

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Riordan J. & Wambach, K (2010). Breastfeeding and Human Lactation. Third Ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 230.

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